



DEHYDRATION

Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Fatal Four

Definition — Dehydration occurs when the body does not have as much fluid as it needs. The severity depends on how much fluid is missing from the body.

Why are individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at a high risk?

- Inability to obtain something to drink without assistance (e.g. wheelchair/bed bound)
- Inability to communicate the need for something to drink (e.g. non-verbal)
- Individuals with chronic illnesses (e.g. uncontrolled/untreated diabetes, cystic fibrosis)
- Certain medications (e.g. diuretics, psychotropic)

Signs & Symptoms

- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Decreased/dark urine
- Absence of tears
- Dizziness
- A lack of sweating

Preventative Action Steps

- Frequently offer fluids and foods with high water content (e.g. watermelon, oranges, jello)
- Provide extra fluids when the temperature rises or activity level increases
- Identify medications that may have dehydration as a side effect
- Track input/output

